

Ernest Hemingway

A Life Inspired

The Ernest Hemingway Collection

John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum



Ernest Hemingway: A Life Inspired

1899-1910s Horton Bay, Michigan

Ernest Hemingway's parents believed that children's physical and moral health were strengthened by outdoor pursuits. Every summer, the family left suburban Chicago to camp in rural Michigan. Hemingway's childhood heroes were Pawnee Bill and Teddy Roosevelt. As a teen, he intended to become an explorer—to have adventures and, like Roosevelt, to write about them.

1918-1919 WWI: Northern Italy

Hemingway joined the Red Cross ambulance corps in 1918, sailing for Europe on May 23. On July 8, during an unauthorized visit to the front at Fossalta, Italy, he was badly wounded. He received extended treatment in Milan, where he met and became secretly engaged to his nurse, Agnes von Kurowsky. She ended their engagement by letter, inspiring "A Very Short Story." Hemingway was not yet 20.

1920s Paris

In 1922, Hemingway and his bride, Hadley, moved to Paris to join a thriving community of artistic and literary expatriates including F. Scott Fitzgerald, Gertrude Stein, and James Joyce. Before he had published anything, his papers were stolen in a Paris train station. He rewrote several lost stories, refining his style.

Mid-1920s Spain

Hemingway's lifelong passion for Spain began soon after he met Gertrude Stein and Spanish artist Pablo Picasso. Stein advised him to see the bullfights to gain insights into tradition and (strange as it may sound) into how to organize and pace a strong story. Spain became his most enduring muse: he would set at least one major work there per decade, starting with his first novel, *The Sun Also Rises* (1926).

1933-1934 Kenya and Tanzania

Hemingway had wanted to travel to Africa since childhood, when he had followed the stories of Teddy Roosevelt's 1909 safari in the *Chicago Tribune*. In the 1930s, he and his second wife, Pauline Pfeiffer, got the chance to go. In order to prepare, he read extensively and interviewed circus lion-tamer Clyde Beatty. The Hemingways hired one of Roosevelt's guides, Philip Percival, as their safari leader.

Mid-1930s The Gulf Stream (I)

The Gulf Stream served the adult Hemingway as northern Michigan had the child. Like that earlier landscape, what started as a playground became a sanctuary, a place to test his physical skills while keeping the world at bay. In 1934, he bought a fishing boat he called *Pilar*—what he hoped to name the daughter he never had.

Highlights from The Ernest Hemingway Collection, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum

1937-1938 The Spanish Civil War

With great political insight, Hemingway said that if fascism went unchecked in Spain, it would threaten all of Europe within the next decade. He covered the Spanish Civil War as a war correspondent alongside (and sometimes in competition with) fellow journalist Martha Gellhorn, who became his third wife. *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Hemingway's novel of this war, is dedicated to Gellhorn.

1944-1945 WWII: Western Europe

Having spent the first part of World War II in Cuba, Hemingway signed on with *Collier's* magazine to chronicle the war in Europe. He landed at Normandy the day after the invasion began and followed Colonel "Buck" Lanham's regiment across France and into Germany—the first American unit to reach Paris. War correspondents were forbidden to engage in active combat, but Hemingway may have.

1948-1950 Venice

After the war, Hemingway and his fourth wife, Mary, traveled to Venice. There they met the young Adriana Ivancich, who became a late muse. Her paintings grace the covers of *Across the River and into the Trees* (1950) and *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952). His fascination for her was entirely one-sided.

Early 1950s The Gulf Stream (II)

For Hemingway, the Gulf Stream provided an ever-changing yet enduring focus for his devotion and talents. He kept his fishing boat, *Pilar*, in the harbor at Cojimar, a Cuban fishing village, from 1940 on. The *Pilar* provided the name for his wisest female character in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940). Cojimar itself inspired what has become his globally most beloved work, *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952).



1962 Washington, DC



Mary Hemingway with the Kennedys

1980 Boston, MA



Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis with
Patrick Hemingway

The Hemingway-Kennedy Connection

President Kennedy made it possible for Ernest Hemingway's widow, Mary, to return to their home in Cuba to retrieve her personal belongings and her late husband's papers, including his manuscripts.

On April 29, 1962, President and Mrs. Kennedy hosted a White House dinner for all of the Nobel Prize winners in the Western Hemisphere. Mary Hemingway represented her late husband, sitting in the place of honor on the President's right.

When Mrs. Kennedy was arranging her husband's Presidential Library, Mary Hemingway offered her what became The Ernest Hemingway Collection: 90% of the writer's manuscripts and papers, over 10,000 photographs, and mementos and artwork.

Patrick Hemingway, the writer's son, and Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis dedicated the Collection in 1980.

*"I would be so proud to have Jack's papers
in Ernest Hemingway's Library—"*

Jacqueline Kennedy to Mary Hemingway

1954 Murchison Falls, Uganda

In January of 1954, Hemingway and his fourth wife, Mary, took off for an aerial tour of the Nile River's Murchison Falls. The wing of their plane caught a utility wire, and the plane crashed. After a very tense night in the open, they and their pilot were rescued. Their flight back to Nairobi also crashed, and Hemingway suffered brain trauma. The press reported the Hemingways dead. While he was recovering, he read his own obituaries.

1954 Stockholm, Sweden



Ernest Hemingway won the 1954 Nobel Prize in Literature in October. He was still suffering the after-effects of the crash and could not attend the ceremony in Stockholm.

"No writer... can accept it other than with humility."

July 2, 1961 Ketchum, Idaho

Still struggling with the long-term effects of the injuries sustained in 1954 and unable to write, Hemingway took his own life at 61. One of the last things he wrote was a sign for his door at the Mayo Clinic, where he had gone for treatment. The sign said, "Former writer at work."

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